

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended) A process for the production of nitric acid with a concentration of 50 to 76% from ammonia and oxygen-bearing gas under pressure, using the mono or dual pressure process, wherein

tail gas is expanded wherein the expansion of tail gas takes place in at least two pressure steps, thereby converting the heat of the gas to energy by means of gas turbines operating at different pressure,

~~the said configuration provides for a device~~ is provided arranged between every two gas turbines and heats each pair of expansion units and intended for heating the expanded tail gas to a temperature of $>450^{\circ}\text{C}$, the said system exploiting the waste heat from the nitric acid production process.

Claim 2 (previously presented) The process according to claim 1, comprising a gas inlet temperature of 500 to 600°C , for the expansion steps, thereby supplying drive energy to further consumers.

Claim 3 (previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the surplus drive energy is provided to ~~for~~ a generator in order to produce electric power.

Claim 4 (currently amended) The process according to claim 3, wherein a motor-generator set is ~~used as the output of said machine~~ provided which is sufficient to ensure the compression drive at the plant startup.

Claim 5 (previously presented) The process according to claim 2, wherein the gas inlet temperature is 535°C for the expansion steps.